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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATICS

Report of the First (Economic) Committee

1. The First (Economic) Committee considered the question of international cooperation in the field of informatics (agenda item 10) at its 12th, 17th and 18th meetings, on 18 and 24 July 1991. It had before it the note by the Secretary-General on international cooperation in the field of informatics (E/1991/104).

2. At its 12th meeting, on 18 July, the Committee held a general discussion on the item. It heard an introductory statement by the Director of the Division of International Organizations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

3. Also at the 12th meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Pakistan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The need to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States

4. At the 17th meeting, on 24 July, the representative of Pakistan, on behalf of Algeria, Colombia, 1/ Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, 1/ Malaysia, Nigeria, 1/ Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Saudi Arabia, 1/ Sri Lanka, 1/ Swaziland, 1/ Turkey, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,

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1/ In accordance with rule 72 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

the United Republic of Tanzania, 1/ Viet Nam 1/ and Zaire, introduced a draft resolution (E/1991/C.1/L.13/Rev.1) entitled "The need to standardize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by Member States". Subsequently, Bangladesh, 1/ Bhutan, 1/ France, Italy, Morocco, Nepal, 1/ Senegal, 1/ the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Uganda 1/ and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

5. At the 18th meeting, on 24 July, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Ahmed Amaziane (Morocco), read out the following revisions which had been agreed upon during informal consultations:

(a) In the title, the word "standardize" was replaced by the word "harmonize" and the words "Member States" were replaced by the words "all States";

(b) In the second preambular paragraph, the words "and observers" were inserted after the words "States Members";

(c) In the third preambular paragraph, the word "Member" was deleted before the word "States";

(d) In the fourth preambular paragraph, the words "Member States" were replaced by the words "all States";

(e) A new fifth preambular paragraph was inserted, which read as follows:

"Bearing in mind the ongoing discussions on the reform of the General Assembly,";

(f) In the operative paragraph, the word "Member" was deleted before the word "States".

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution E/1991/C.1/L.13/Rev.1, as orally revised (see para. 14 below, draft resolution I).

7. Before the draft resolution was adopted, statements were made by the representative of the United States of America and the observer for Uganda, as well as by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Amaziane (Morocco).

International cooperation in the field of informatics

8. At the 17th meeting, on 24 July, the observer for Ghana, 1/ on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, introduced a draft resolution (E/1991/C.1/L.19) entitled "International cooperation in the field of informatics".

9. At the 18th meeting, on 24 July, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Amaziane (Morocco), informed the Committee of the results of the informal consultations held on the draft resolution and stated that it was the Committee's understanding that the report requested in operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution E/1991/C.1/L.19 would be submitted as part of a single

report together with the information requested in the operative paragraph of draft resolution E/1991/C.1/L.13/Rev.1.

10. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the Netherlands (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Community) and the United States of America, as well as by the representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

11. The representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Community, then proposed the following amendments to the draft resolution:

(a) In operative paragraph 1, the words "the strengthening" were replaced by the words "a more effective use";

(b) In operative paragraph 2, the words "to continue" were inserted before the words "to reinforce".

12. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution E/1991/C.1/L.19, as orally amended (see para. 14 below, draft resolution II).

13. Before the draft resolution was adopted, the representative of Ghana made a statement on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST (ECONOMIC) COMMITTEE

14. The First (Economic) Committee recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

The need to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting the vital importance of informatics in promoting and accelerating development,

Considering it imperative that States Members of the United Nations and observers have easy, economical, uncomplicated and unhindered access to the growing computerized databases and information systems and services of the United Nations,

Regretting that lack of the above conditions in existing United Nations informatics systems limits such access by States at the present time,

Stressing the need for representatives of all States to be actively associated with United Nations bodies, such as the International Computing Centre, dealing with informatics within the United Nations system,

Bearing in mind the ongoing discussions on the reform of the General Assembly,

Requests the Secretary-General to prepare, within existing resources and in consultation with representatives of States, a study analysing the causes of the present situation with respect to United Nations informatics systems and providing an outline of a rapid solution to the problem, leading to easier, economical, uncomplicated and unhindered access to United Nations computerized databases and information systems and services, which are of great importance to all States, in particular to the developing countries, and to report thereon to the Council at its regular session of 1992.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

International cooperation in the field of informatics

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its decision 1989/179 of 27 July 1989, its resolution 1990/58 of 26 July 1990 and decision 7.1 adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its one hundred and thirty-first session, 2/

Taking note of the report on international cooperation in the field of informatics prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 3/

Considering the existing disparities in the level of development of informatics between the developed and developing countries,

Reaffirming the importance of the development of informatics as an instrument of international cooperation and endogenous development,

1. Recommends a more effective use of the existing coordinating mechanisms, with a view to regular consultations and coordination concerning informatics within the United Nations system, including consultations and coordination between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, through its Intergovernmental Informatics Programme, the International Telecommunication Union and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization;

2. Invites the above-mentioned organizations to continue to reinforce their subprogrammes concerning international cooperation and regional

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2/ See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its one hundred and thirty-first session, Paris, 17 May-22 June 1989 (131 EX/Decisions).

3/ E/1991/104, annex.

strategies in informatics in developing countries, in particular the Informafrica project of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

3. Invites Member States to encourage and promote activities to expand the endogenous skills of their population in the field of informatics, and calls upon donor countries to make voluntary contributions to the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with a view to strengthening its ability to provide appropriate support for projects in the field of informatics for the benefit of developing countries;

4. Decides to keep this issue under review and to examine it at its regular session of 1992, and requests the Secretary-General to submit to it at that session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.